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THE CRAYON.

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PHIDIAS AND HIS WORKS.

III.

(Translated for THE CRAYON from "THE TORSO," by Adolf Stahr.)

THE most famous artists of Greece, especially the painters, were in the habit of exhibiting their best works publicly in the cities of Greece, in order to have them accessible to all members of the community; this exhibition was free, and so jealous were the people of this privilege that the celebrated painter Zeuxis was censured for asking a remuneration for a view of his picture of the beautiful Helena. The example of Athens was imitated all over Greece; even in Rome, where Grecian art had found a second home, the greatest publicity in regard to the exhibition of the better class of works became the universal rule. This mode of popularizing Art bore rich fruits in the course of time. The people of imperial Rome began to appreciate the beauties of Grecian art, and this sympathy grew so strong, that even Tiberius was restrained from appropriating to himself a popular work of art, which he contemplated withdrawing from the public sight.

The revival of Art in the middle ages was marked by the same popular feature. Churches and chapels, town, trade, and guild halls, were always open to the people, because they were receptacles of the principal paintings by the great masters; and in the same manner we find in public squares, parks, and halls, fountains and monuments that reveal the genius of the sculptor in marble and bronze. Never was there, however, such popular enthusiasm for Art as during the times of Pericles and Phidias. The present generation, so boastful of its culture, is in this respect far behind antiquity. Art, instead of being made, as in Greece, to blossom in the free air of humanity, is treated by the moderns much more like a hot-house exotic. The sympathy which the people of Athens cherished for the works of the artist reacted beautifully upon his social position. Of this, however, we propose to speak in a separate chapter. At present we will only remark that an immense change was wrought upon the standing and the aims of the profession by the fame, the genius, the prestige, and the influence of Phidias. Genius took henceforth the place of ingenuity, and science that of mechanical craft. Schools of art were inaugurated under the auspices of great masters. Here the young aspirants for fame formed a body of disciples who stood in the same relation to their teachers as the students of philosophy, rhetoric, and sophistry did to theirs. The artists were soon constituted into a body invested with intellectual power; they became umpires in matters of religion and aesthetics, and the mental peers of statesmen, poets, and philosophers. A work of Art like the Zeus of Phidias, which, according to the saying of one of the ancients, "gave a new religious meaning to the wor-

ship of God," was a memorable event in the religious history of Greece. Every succeeding great work of Art exercised a corresponding great effect upon religion. It was so with the Juno of Polycletus, and with all religious and ideal works produced during those times, when Art drew its inspiration from the popular religion and public opinion.

THE MINERVA OF PHIDIAS.

Zeus is the father and the chief of the gods; Minerva (Pallas Athena), who sprang from his head, the divinity of wisdom and of vigor of intellect, was his favorite daughter. Zeus and Athena, the poetical creations of Homer, the highest and greatest individualities of the Grecian Olympus, were idealized and immortalized by the productions of Phidias, which are, in fact, the Iliad and the Odyssey of statuary.

Phidias endeavored, in three distinct works, to create an idea of the person of Athena, all of which were seen by Pausanias. His first effort was a colossal bronze statue of ATHENA PROMACHUS, the protectress of the state in times of war. This statue was about sixty feet high, exclusive of the base; it stood on the Acropolis, between the Propylaea and the Parthenon, holding in the left hand the raised shield, and in the right the spear, and it towered above the two buildings with an awe-inspiring majesty that excited universal homage. Eight hundred years after its erection, Alaric, the king of the Visigoths, on his triumphant tour through Hellas, as he came near the gates of Athens, bowed reverently, if ignorantly, to the divine spirit of Athena. Parrhasius, the distinguished painter, furnished the designs for the battle of the Centaurs, which was engraved on the shield of Athena by the artist Mys, one of the pupils of Phidias. At the feet of the statue was the owl, the venerable and sacred inmate of the Acropolis.

A second bronze statue of the same divinity was called the LEMNOSIAN, after the island of Lemnos, the inhabitants thereof having given the commission for it to Phidias, and afterwards presented it to the Acropolis of Athens. Smaller in size than the first statue, it excelled it in beauty, and hence the statue was simply designated as the "beautiful formed." Phidias himself pronounced it his master-work in this sphere of art, and we find Lucian especially lost in admiration before the perfect and harmonious details of the countenance.

The most celebrated of all the Minerva statues of Phidias—of which he produced a great number for various towns and temples of Greece—was the ATHENA PARTHENOS (the virgin), being a statue of Minerva of gold and ivory, nearly forty feet high including the base. It was intended to ornament the temple of the divinity (the Parthenon) situated upon the Acropolis of Athens. Previous to the era of Phidias, these temple-images were

executed in such a manner, that only the head, the hands, and the feet were made of white marble, while the rest of the body was of gilded wood or of bronze, and clothed—like the holy virgin of the Church of Rome—with splendidly embroidered real garments taken from the wardrobe of the temple. Phidias was the first to substitute for marble the smoother and more brilliant ivory, and for the real garment an artificial drapery worked in gold, which was so skillfully arranged that it could be easily taken off and put on again, and weighed out to the persons who happened to be intrusted with the treasury of the temple. The eyes were worked in marble, and painted; the goddess wore on her head the helmet, crested with a sphinx, and ornamented on both sides with griffins; her breast is covered with a coat of mail, the *Ægis*; the girdle was formed of serpents, falling down like tassels; on the breast of the *Ægis* appeared the appalling Medusa's head; the spear is lifted up by the goddess, while she holds the shield downward; the ornamental work of the shield, the base and the other smaller parts of the statue illustrated incidents of national tradition. A whole world of ingenious devices was pressed into the service of Art for the purpose of producing a picturesque contrast between the massive and gorgeous richness of every distinct part, and the austere and subdued chasteness of the general effect, thus combining simplicity with majesty, blending, as it were, sternness of thought with ardor of imagination, philosophy with religion, principle with sentiment, judgment with feeling, the modest virtue of the sage with the soaring ambition of the conqueror, the severe qualities of reality with the ideal conceptions of the poet's soul. The fundamental principle which directed the colossal creations of Phidias was this: * to produce an effect which should impose upon spectators at a distance, without having this effect impaired by a closer inspection; hence, the stupendous magnitude and soaring outlines of his work, which impressed the distant beholder with a sense of awe and majesty; hence, again, the remarkable care bestowed upon the rich appearance of minor parts, so as to keep up the sentiment of admiration in proportion as the work became subjected to a closer inspection. The general effect was thus not only maintained, but it was infinitely enhanced by the conflict of sensations produced by the sense of delight and admiration awakened by the gorgeous detail following so immediately upon the impression of magnitude and expansiveness which the statue, as a whole, engrafted upon the mind. The saying of the ancients, that "Phidias, while possessing a perfect mastery over the most majestic conception, was equally matchless in the most trivial detail," was thus fully vindicated. The lower end of the stupendous spear rested upon a dragon, and the inner part of the shield, at the left hand of the goddess, was ornamented with scenes illustrating the battles of the giants; while episodes from that of the Amazons (in bas-relief), embellished its outer surface. Even the soles (four fingers high) of the shoes of the goddess exhibited, on close examination, en-

gravings representing the war between the Centaurs and the Lapithæ,—an incident which is employed so frequently in Grecian sacred Art, in order to serve as a symbol of the triumph of Grecian heroism over the barbarism of the aborigines, of the victory of a civilized people loved and protected by the divinities over chaotic anarchy and godless savages. The genius which produced the splendid Metopes outside of the Parthenon, was worthily reflected in this work. Even the base, which occupied Phidias for several months, was ornamented with a wonderful relief, representing the creation of Pandora, and the gifts bestowed upon her by the Olympian gods. Nice, the goddess of victory, also in ivory, and apparelled with garments of gold, stood upon Minerva's right hand, holding out to her a trophy: the stately figure of Nice being well-proportioned to the colossal and principal statue of Minerva, far from interfering with the general effect, added to it. The remarkable manifestation of power in the attitude of Minerva—the figure of Nice being larger than life—standing upon the hand of the greater statue—thus suspended, as it were, in the free air, has elicited repeated expressions of admiration from all who have recorded their impressions of this wondrous work.

Phidias is the creator of the Minerva ideal. Athena Parthenos, as Anselm Feuerbach beautifully remarks, had to arise, as it were, fresh-born from the womb of the artist's spirit, in order to appear before the astonished gaze of the Hellenic world, realizing all the ideal attributes of the true goddess. Athena's heroic conduct on the battle-field, her skill in every kind of work in which women were employed, the wisdom of her counsel, the works of her ingenuity in the art of weaving, or again, the happy influence which she exercised upon the fortunes of favorites,—all these various characteristics of the goddess, which are only to be found scattered about in fragmentary episodes in the poem of Homer, were woven together by the genius of Phidias, and thus Athena's divine attributes were, for the first time, made palpable by the spirit of unity and completeness which the artist imparted to his creations. His combined creations served at the same time as a eulogy of the city of Athens itself, a hymn of praise embodied in marble, celebrating the heroism, the triumphs, the wisdom, and humanity of the Athenians from the glorious times of the royal hero Theseus to the fresh laurels of Marathon and Salamis. Phidias stamped upon Athena the attributes of a true divinity of civilization, representing her at the same time as an unflinching warrior in this great battle of humanity.

Such are the fundamental traits of the Pallas ideal, as it arose from the conception of Phidias. More statues of this than of any other goddess, have fortunately come down to us, granting to us the privilege of admiring some of the beauties of the work. In all the statues we find the same austere traits of character. When tempered by an expression of gentleness, the softening influence still seems to come from the goddess alone and not from the woman. Her personal appearance is in strict harmony with the

* See Böttiger's work on Archaeology, page 88.

ideal of a godlike but rigid virgin. The hips are narrow, almost masculine; the breast only moderately developed, and clothed with the protecting and terrible *Ægis*. The formation of the eyes is peculiarly characteristic. They are neither vaulted nor full in expression; they are slightly sunk, as if absorbed in reflections. This distinguishes the Athena Pallas from the goddess Roma, who is in other respects easily confounded with her; the Roman artists represented her like the Athena in a sitting posture, with eyes casting free and bold glances from beneath the helmet, while the Athena Promachus, with her belligerent attitude and daring looks, became the prototype of the Roman goddess of war, Bellona. Of the great original statue of Phidias, however, which cost nearly \$700,000, nothing remains but a piece of ivory, which was excavated some twenty years ago, from the ruins of the Parthenon. This, and the still unobiterated marks of the space in the centre of the temple, where the statue once stood, are the only souvenirs which have come down to us of this sublime work of Art.

THE PALLAS OF VELLETRI, in the Louvre,—so called after the city of Velletri, in the Pontifical States, where the statue was excavated in 1797. Of all the statues which have come down to us, this gives us the best general impression of the works of Phidias. It is $10\frac{1}{2}$ high, and is cut in the best Parian marble. The helmet is not ornamented, and has the reclining, long, oval form of the ancient Grecian visor-helmet. The disposition of the rich drapery, the amplitude of the body, the austere but benign expression of the countenance all contribute to produce a powerful impression. The statue is in an excellent state of preservation; only the tip of the nose, the hands, and several of the toes being missing, all of which have been restored in modern times. There has been unfortunately a blunder in the restoration of the hands. Originally the goddess carried a lance in one hand and a trophy in the other, which, as they were made of bronze, were the first objects that attracted the attention of robbers. The hair and some other parts of the body seem to have been painted with colors. Wonderful is the disposition of the drapery and the fall of the folds over the girdle. Among the nine Minerva statues of the Louvre, the one which we have described absorbs so much of the attention of the visitor, that he forgets almost to look at the others. This statue reveals the character of the goddess as supposed to be moulded by the genius of Phidias. The smooth brow, the long and delicate nose, the rather austere expression of the mouth and the cheeks, the energetic chin,—all are in wonderful harmony with Phidias's creation. A COLOSSAL BUST OF PALLAS in the Glyptotheca of Munich, resembles the one of Velletri in a most striking manner. The helmet is not ornamented; instead of a feather there is a serpent. The parted hair falls over the neck, and is tied by a ribbon. In the treatment of the hair we recognize traces of the olden style. It is not well dressed, and wears a negligent, wire-like appearance, as if a greater attention to its arrangement had been

incompatible with the character of a goddess, whose chief adornment consisted of her helmet and her maidenly dignity. The expression of the countenance is full of an ideal beauty; mouth and cheeks are serious and austere; the forehead is exceedingly noble; and unfathomable and singularly fascinating is the deep glance of the thoughtful, calm, and sunken eyes. Feuerbach, from whom we take this description, remarks enthusiastically of this bust, that it is "pure spirit made flesh in marble."

THE MINERVA CHIGI AT DRESDEN.—This statue, although less colossal than that of Velletri, is eight feet high, and altogether composed on a larger scale. The Minerva at Dresden wears the ampler *Chiton*, which falls over the feet. Over the *Chiton* she wears a short *Diploidion*, which is composed of two parts, covering both breast and back. The graceful, wave-like folds of the *Diploidion* form an agreeable contrast with the more rigid and heavy aspect of the *Chiton*. The *Ægis*, which is covered with scales, is fastened on the right shoulder, and extends over a part of the breast to the left arm. The figure breathes majestic repose, and the countenance (which is perhaps too youthful) is marked by great gentleness of expression. The whole statue was found in excellent condition, with the exception of the helmet and the arms, which had to be restored; the face seems to have been impaired by the attempt at restoration.

THE MINERVA OF CASSEL, ranked by many amateurs among first class works. The admirable disposition of the drapery reveals the technical genius of the artist, particularly the *Ægis*, which is an excellent imitation in marble of the strong but elastic material (leather) of the *Ægis*, as it was shown in the traditions of the Athenians.*

THE MINERVA GIUSTINIANI AT ROME—at present in the Braccio nuovo of the Vatican—during Winckelmann's era about the most celebrated of the Pallas statues, and famous for a long time afterwards as a genuine work of Grecian "high Art," although Winckelmann attributes it, from the broad dimensions and the sharp angles of the nose, to the "old orthodox school." This is the same statue of which Goethe wrote to his friends, "that he did not deem himself worthy of speaking about it." He characterized the style as a transition from the sublime and severe to the beautiful:

"die Knospe, indem sie sich öffnet;"

as Goethe expresses himself. The expression of the countenance, without striking one particularly as supernatural, impresses the more with a sense of spiritual grandeur; the human is not merged in the divine. Feuerbach, on beholding the holy and dignified attitude of the statue and the sphinx on the crest of the helmet, was reminded first of the great Minerva statues of Phidias, and next of that of Lemnos; Lucian's description of the latter being almost

* Feuerbach, *Plastik*, I. Pages 22, 23.

literally applicable to the head of the Minerva Giustiniani. We quote from Feuerbach: "The beautiful form of the "nose, the loveliness of the cheeks, and the graces of the "virgin, which, in the mighty daughter of Zeus, assume a "character of divine majesty and of loftiness of thought,— "all these render the statue superior to other statues of "the same goddess." Feuerbach's admiration of the wonders achieved in the marble, "which made one of matter and spirit," seems but natural. The work is seen to best advantage by viewing it from the right. This holds good for most ancient statues, considering that on the left hand the stones which supported them interfered with the view. Thus the best view is always afforded on the right (Feuerbach. Supplement IV. page 34). Here nothing mars the view, the left shoulder rises while the right retreats, and the splendid drapery of the left part of the body unfolds itself in full beauty. The countenance, too, appears here in its purest aspect, and the narrow and high helmet, which, when seen from a full front view, seems to sit clumsily upon the rich hair, assumes for the inspector of the statue, who keeps on the right side, a graceful form, and one in harmony with the shape of the head.

At the feet of Minerva is a carefully elaborated serpent, which, as if anxious to manifest its greeting at the approach of the goddess, reveals, in the folds which it forms as it winds around the statue, a remarkable expression of impetuosity. Feuerbach's sagacious remark in this connection should be borne in mind. He describes Minerva as "the goddess of "a temple, just re-crossing the threshold of her terrestrial "sanctuary. The faithful domestic guardian of the consecrated locality, displays the greatest *empressolement* on " beholding his mistress, and after clasping itself around "her, as if to encircle the goddess with a magic spell of "love, the serpent nestles itself near her side, and with "head erect, looks up in token of a trusting affection."

PALLAS IN THE VILLA ALBANI.—This is the statue to which Winckelmann awarded the prize of beauty. Goethe's friend, Henry Meyer, remarks that the form is not a tender and graceful one, but rather a divinely chaste, beautiful, and sublime form. The folds of the drapery are gems of design, evincing the greatest taste and discrimination in the selection, although the smallness of the folds prevents the full effect of light and shade. But the matchless purity of the profile, the superb rounding of the chin, the wondrous fascination and grave charm of the half-opened mouth, and the remarkable state of preservation of the whole statue, assign to it a foremost rank amongst the remains of Grecian statuary.

Besides the Pallas statues named, there are two more first class statues of Minerva extant. One in the Hope Collection, at London, and the other is a superb and colossal statue of Athena, at Naples.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

The blessed Damozel lean'd out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes knew more of rest and shade
Than waters still'd at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
And her hair lying down her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Her seem'd she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, the day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she lean'd o'er me—her hair
Fall all about my face
Nothing: the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath the tides of day and night
With flame and blackness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

She scarcely heard her sweet new friends:
Playing at holy games,
Softly they spake among themselves
Their virginal chaste names;
And the souls, mounting up to God,
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bow'd above the vast
Waste sea of worlds that swarm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she lean'd on warn,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fix'd place of Heaven, she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path: and now she spoke, as when
The stars sang in their spheres.